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Chairman Towns Requests Bi-Partisan Meeting With Secretary Robert Gates and Other Cabinet Secretaries

WASHINGTON – U.S. Representative Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY), chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform announced that a major portion of the committee’s agenda will be focused on working with the Obama Administration and its cabinet secretaries to form action plans to combat waste, fraud and abuse – detailed today by the Government Accountability Office’s report on high risk federal programs.

“We come together two days after President Obama’s inauguration. The President has pledged to take a hard look at what works and what doesn’t in our government. The committee can and will be his allies in this task.” said Chairman Towns. “As a subcommittee chair last Congress, I became very familiar with the programs on this list. In fact, I held hearings on a dozen of these topics. My goal was to find legislative solutions to these problems, and we did so, especially in the area of contract management reform. I plan to take the same approach as full committee chair.”

Chairman Towns also laid out other areas, discussed in the report, where the committee will focus its attention:

- Any possible re-organization of financial regulatory structures;
- The federal suspension and debarment system;
- The accountability of Medicare and Medicaid systems as well as food safety and FDA reform;
- and,
- Competitive contracting issues.

Together with Ranking Republican U.S. Representative Darrell Issa (R-CA), Chairman Towns

sent a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates requesting a meeting to discuss the Department of Defense's eight programs and projects combined with another seven for which the Department has shared responsibility. "With the country facing its most serious financial and economic problems in decades and fighting two wars overseas, we cannot afford for the Department to get less than the maximum value from the resources Congress and the American taxpayers provide." said Towns in of his invitation to Secretary Gates.

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Documents and Links

- [Letter to Robert Gates](#)
- [GAO speech](#)